OK

July 28, 1982 Sue — This will be in the record tomorrow

TO/ LES
FR/ DENISE/BOB
RE/ ISSUES UPDATE. FOR YOUR SIGN-OFF TODAY

SWAN SONG FOR CLINCH RIVER

Mr. Speaker. Mr. AuCoin. The Clinch River Breeder Reactor is back for another round of funding. And its supporters stand ready to dig ever-deeper into the federal coffers to keep this nuclear Edsel alive.

But, there is simply no compelling reason to develop this reactor. The Clinch River Breeder Reactor was originally designed to meet a sharp rise in demand for nuclear-generated electricity and a critical shortage of uranium to fuel that demand. That was a decade ago. Today, things have changed.

Breeder reactors are not going to be needed in the foreseeable future for either nuclear fuel or electrical energy. Domestic uranium reserves have almost doubled in the last ten years and electrical growth rates have dropped below 3% annually -- a trend that is expected to continue. The Department of Energy's own blue-ribbon Energy Research Advisory Board ranked the Clinch River Breeder Reactor as a low priority item.

The cost overruns on the project are astounding. When the Clinch River Breeder Reactor project was initially conceived, it was going to cost $400 million. Today, the price tag is more than $3 billion and key components of the reactor, such as steam generators, are coming in years late and 1000% over cost.

Even the utility industry has given up its front-row seats in the cheering section. When the project was first borne, the utility industry contribution was placed at 50%. That investment commitment has now dropped to less than 10% which leaves the American taxpayer to shoulder 90% of the cost.

The Administration has bought into the project over the objections its own Budget Director, David Stockman. In fact, Mr. Stockman, admitted that the inclusion of the Clinch River project in the

I can only say that millions of elderly citizens whose health care funds were cut would wish that Mr. Stockman would make such concessions for them instead.

Administration's budget last year was a concession to the Senate Majority Leader, Howard Baker. "I just got out of the way," Stockman said.

The Clinch River Breeder Reactor is not only an economic boondoggle, it is a technological dinosaur and a threat to public safety. Contracts have been signed for steam generators despite warnings by the General Accouting Office that these generators are safety risks and require more testing.

The President's zeal for funding this project flies in the face of his so-called free market energy philosophy. While the Administration has abandoned support for energy conservation, renewable energy and alternative energy sources in the name of Adam Smith's invisible hand, it has conspiculously requested the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to exempt the reactor from standard licensing procedures to expedite construction.

The Clinch River Breeder Reactor will not lessen our dependence on foreign oil demand. U.S. oil demand is largely for transportation, not electricity. If the $2.5 billion required to finish the project were instead spent on insulating American homes, we would save the equivalent of 48 million barrels of oil each year for the next 25 years, without risking the dangers that lurk in the proliferation of plutonium for nuclear weapons and bombs.

Last year, we failed to bury Clinch River by only 20 votes in the House and just 2 votes in the Senate. This year I urge my colleagues to join me in singing a swan song for Clinch River.

It's too bad for America, too, that Mr. Howard Baker's pet project wasn't solar or renewable energy; why is it that political back-scratching never seems to benefit the causes that will do the Nation the most good?

DRAFT LETTER

Dear Friend:

For the Administration, the Clinch River Breeder Reactor is its premier nuclear project. For the American people, it's a raw deal. We're being asked to pay a high price for a project that is expensive, dangerous and unnecessary.

Although, the evidence argues convincingly for termination, the President still wants to spend $252 million on the project in 1983 -- that's $700,000 a day! I have written letters to both the President and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to protest this spending.

The fact that the Administration wants to proceed "full speed ahead" on Clinch River underscores its clear preference for nuclear power over alternative energy sources.

Opposition to the project is stronger than ever. However, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water, which must approve funding for the project, has no plans to bring a bill to the House floor before the fall elections. When a bill is finally brought to the floor I will fight to delete funding for Clinch River.

The project ~~is a turkey~~ can only be called a "turkey." I hope we can declare an early Thanksgiving this year and kill it once and for all.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

LES AuCOIN
Member of Congress

LA:db